

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE H-13

WASHINGTON POST
8 October 1983

JACK ANDERSON

CIA Report Sees Domestic Strife For Vietnamese

Eight years after the United States pulled out of Vietnam, that unhappy nation is in dire economic straits. But its leaders are not likely to discontinue the occupation of Cambodia, despite the financial drain of maintaining 200,000 troops there.

This is the crux of a recent classified report prepared by the State Department's Intelligence and Research Bureau. My associate Dale Van Atta was shown a copy of the report, which notes that Vietnam's aging leaders are still in firm control of the country "despite their infirmities."

The report adds: "While they do not face any significant opposition over foreign policy," Vietnamese leaders are having trouble with their foundering domestic policies.

"In the past year, particularly since December, the leadership has modified the 'liberal' economic policies which had brought increased production but weakened state control," the report says. "Hanoi is now trying to reassert control over commerce and production, constrict the

burgeoning private sector and plan renewed collectivization of southern agriculture.

"These moves appear to have been triggered by conservative attacks before last year's party congress and by growing instability in the marketplace."

It's not clear, the analysts wrote, whether Vietnamese leader Le Duan, 76, "resisted changes in policies closely associated with him, but it is evident that the military was a leading advocate of the get-tough policy" on non-Marxist economic entrepreneurs.

"Ho Chi Minh City [formerly Saigon], with its freewheeling market, has been the prime target," the report adds, "and there are indications that the party center is unhappy with local party efforts." The analysts speculate that party leaders at lower levels, where discipline is often lax, are reluctant to jeopardize production gains by adopting doctrinaire Marxist policies.

"Corruption and persistent frictions between northern and southern cadres compound the leadership's problems," the analysts wrote. At its June meeting, the Central Committee warned that harsh measures would be taken against party cadres who fail to carry out Hanoi's new line.

"How widely the threats can or

will be carried out remains to be seen," the report says.

In contrast to their domestic problems, the party leadership is having no trouble over foreign policy.

"Leading cadres apparently have not questioned Hanoi's determination to occupy Kampuchea [formerly Cambodia] for as long as needed to ensure a subservient regime, despite some misgivings at lower levels," the report says.

The State Department intelligence analysts dismiss Hanoi's talks with other Southeast Asian nations as nothing more than propaganda—"superficial diplomatic discussions [undertaken] in the hope of gaining acquiescence in Hanoi's position."

As for Vietnam's relations with the Soviets, the report foresees no change.

"Concern about excessive dependence on the U.S.S.R. is outweighed by the necessity of Soviet support for Vietnam's survival."

Some of this may change with the death of Le Duan and his elderly cohorts because, unlike Ho Chi Minh, he has apparently made no preparations for the succession.

His successors also might decide to jettison the costly occupation of Cambodia.

The report assesses this as "possible but not likely."